

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 005575

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [EFIN](#) [ISRAELI](#) [SOCIETY](#) [GOI](#) [INTERNAL](#) [ECONOMY](#) [AND](#) [FINANCE](#)

SUBJECT: ORGANIZED CRIME AND NARCOTICS TRADE IN ISRAEL

1. (U) SUMMARY: According to an Israeli law enforcement official, all categories of criminal activity are on the rise. The illegal drug trade, organized crime, murder, and extortion present major challenges to the Israeli police. While countries in the Middle East, Europe, Asia and South America provide a springboard for criminal elements to move illegal drugs into Israel, the trans-border Bedouin cooperation causes serious concern. The official remarked on the unusual nature of Arab-Jewish cooperation in illegal activities such as drug and weapons smuggling and the trafficking of women. END SUMMARY.

INP Organization and Mission

2. (U) On September 1, Chief Superintendent Chaim Eliyahu of the Israel National Police's (INP's) Drug and Organized Crime Unit gave a presentation to embassy officials on his unit's organization and mission. Eliyahu said the INP falls under one command and is divided into six districts: Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, southern, northern, central, and West Bank, which falls under joint-jurisdiction with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). He said each district has a different mission, noting that police officials in Jerusalem focus on crimes related to religious extremism, while those in Tel Aviv focus on other criminal activities like larceny, murder, illegal drugs and organized crime.

3. (U) Eliyahu said different waves of immigrants to Israel have brought with them criminal elements, such as immigrants from the former Soviet Union who commit crimes not seen in the past. He said that violent crimes and alcohol-related crimes, once negligible in number, are now becoming prevalent. He also discussed money laundering and the new laws in this area that have helped Israel prosecute many offenders. He explained that in the past an individual could deposit or invest a considerable amount of money without being investigated; such transactions are now closely scrutinized by the GOI.

Eliyahu: Drugs Flow From the Land the Sea and the Air

4. (U) Eliyahu said that the porous borders with Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria allow for the easy flow of hashish, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin into Israel. One kilogram of marijuana sells for NIS 1,000 (USD 222) in the vicinity of the border regions, while the same amount would cost 3,000 to 5,000 NIS (USD 666 to 1111) in Tel Aviv. He stated that the police seize 15 tons of illegal drugs a year, which is only about five percent of all illegal drugs that enter Israel. (Note: On August 29 at the Jordanian border, police confiscated 30 kilograms of pure heroin - about 300,000 doses - with an estimated worth of NIS 3.5 million. The report indicates that police believe Bedouin and Jewish residents of the Negev were involved. End Note.)

5. (U) Eliyahu further said that the smuggling of amphetamines and ecstasy from Europe via the nation's airports and sea terminals poses a serious problem. As an example, he cited the July 7 arrest by Jerusalem police of seven members of an ecstasy ring involved in smuggling 90,000 pills from Europe worth millions of shekels.

Criminal Cooperation

6. (U) Eliyahu said Arab and Jewish criminal networks in Israel work efficiently across language, religious, cultural, and physical barriers. He stated that drug smugglers take advantage of the ease with which Israeli-Bedouin communicate with Bedouin tribes in Egypt. In addition, Arabs living in Israel often have family in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and other Arab countries, and those involved in illegal activities use these ties to traffic women, drugs and weapons.

Turf Wars

7. (U) Eliyahu said that gun battles between crime families continue and have intensified over the years. He added that crime families do not abide by any "code of honor" when it

comes to dealing with rivals, and even use "hit men" on occasion. It is also not out of the ordinary to see street battles between crime families involving rockets, machine guns and bombs.

18. (U) On August 29, the INP arrested 25 members of the Israeli-Arab Hariri-Ayat crime family, which operates in northern and central Israel. Those arrested are suspected of extorting "protection" funds as well as attempted murder, arson, money-laundering, and drug offenses. The Hariri and Ayat families are related, but their "troops" consist of non-family members, including several Jews. The ring has an ongoing battle with the Abed al-Khader crime family and more than a dozen people have been killed in turf battles between them.

19. (U) Media reports state that two Israelis were recently arrested for allegedly sending a police "mole" to murder a known underworld figure, Pinchas Buhbut. The report indicates that the officer involved was from an elite Jerusalem police unit. In a similar story, Israel has requested the extradition of a Lithuanian citizen (Marius Daiminuskous) who allegedly trained and led a team of assassins from Belarus to murder Israeli underworld figures Yaacov Alperon and Shoni Gavrieli.

Who is Ze'ev Rosenstein?

10. (U) Ze'ev Rosentein, a member of an Israeli-directed international drug smuggling network which has trafficked millions of ecstasy pills into Israel is serving time in an Israeli prison. The U.S. is seeking his extradition on charges of conspiracy to distribute 700,000 ecstasy pills in the U.S. This case is ongoing. If he is extradited, media sources indicate it would be the first time that Israel has agreed to allow the extradition of an Israeli citizen who is a full-time resident of the country.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

KURTZER